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Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Letter dated 31 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the declaration of the Cuban non-governmental organizations against the embargo (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 29.

(*Signed*) Bruno **Rodríguez Parrilla**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the Cuban Non-Governmental Organizations against the Embargo

The Cuban non-governmental organizations, having been informed that on 4 November 2003 the General Assembly of the United Nations, after examining the report of the Secretary-General containing the replies of 86 Governments and 19 organs and agencies of the United Nations system, will discuss and vote on the draft resolution submitted by Cuba entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" and meeting in their Forum against the Embargo, have agreed to issue the following declaration:

The genocidal policy of imposing an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is grounded in the expansionist designs of the United States of America, reflected in the so-called Monroe Doctrine and the Manifest Destiny concept, which are instruments for penetration and interference in the Latin American and Caribbean republics that in the case of Cuba have been reinforced by the "geographical destiny" and "ripe apple" theories and action such as intervention in Cuba's War of Independence against Spain, the subsequent interventional government, the imposition of the Platt Amendment and a military base in Guantánamo, various direct interventions by United States troops, the fraudulent Reciprocity Agreements and the control of our economy and trade during the first half of the twentieth century.

The imposition and intensification of the embargo reflect the conflict between a free and sovereign Cuba and a dependent Cuba subject or annexed to the United States of America. It is clear to all of us that the aim of the embargo policy is to destroy the Cuban nation and impose the will of the United States on our little country through coercion and force, in defiance of the norms of international law and against the will and determination of the Cuban people to defend their sovereignty and their right to self-determination.

The embargo imposed on Cuba has caused enormous damage to the Cuban economy, officially estimated at over $72 billion, not including the $54 billion in direct damage caused to economic targets and individuals through acts of sabotage and terrorism promoted, organized and financed from the United States.

The human costs have been incalculable. The embargo has made it impossible to save lives, including those of children who have been denied essential medicines, or to alleviate the pain and suffering of the sick. These costs have been reduced as a result of the efforts and sacrifices of health workers, but the moral damage cannot be quantified.

Similarly, projects aimed at promoting the material and spiritual development of society, including cultural, educational, religious, scientific and sports projects involving the interaction of innumerable social actors, including non-governmental organizations, could have progressed much further had they not been hindered by the embargo policy and the attendant unjust laws.

We are convinced that the economic war being waged by the United States against Cuba has no legal foundation and that according to the provisions of article II (c) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted on 9 December 1948, it qualifies as an act of genocide, thus constituting a crime under international law and a veritable and completely flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people as a whole.

The Cuban non-governmental organizations recognize and applaud the enormous efforts that the Cuban Government and Cuban institutions are making to ensure that despite the difficulties and damage caused by the economic war being waged against Cuba, our people can enjoy substantial social, economic and cultural benefits and continue their development with a view to further improving their quality of life.

Similarly, the Forum condemns the genocidal policy applied to our country by successive United States Governments and reaffirms its full support for the Cuban Government as regards the adoption of the measures necessary to defeat or frustrate the aim of the embargo, namely to starve Cuba into submission, and to defend at all costs our sovereignty and national independence and our right to create a better life.

The Cuban non-governmental organizations associate themselves with the well-founded call for free trade with United States producers and traders, to the benefit of both parties, according to internationally established rules, especially with a view to the acquisition by Cuban enterprises and institutions of food, medicines, medical equipment and educational, cultural and technological materials for the benefit of our children, our men and women, Cubans young and old, the handicapped and our people as a whole, as well as the right of our intellectuals, scientists, artists and athletes to enjoy free access to the sources of knowledge and information existing in the United States and exchange with them our own knowledge, thus promoting mutual friendship and understanding between our peoples.

The Cuban non-governmental organizations express their deep gratitude for the support and assistance received from the institutions and organizations of fraternal peoples, including the people of the United States itself, and invite them to continue increasing their support until we are victorious in our struggle. United States citizens are likewise suffering the effects of this policy of their Government, which prevents them from fully exercising their constitutional rights and liberties in their relations with Cuba.

As part of its efforts to isolate Cuba, the United States Government has sought to internationalize its aggressive policy in every possible area, exerting pressure of all kinds on Governments, institutions and individuals in other countries and resorting to lies and distortions of the truth.

The Cuban non-governmental organizations urge the Governments of the States members of the European Union to dissociate themselves from any act that contributes to the enforcement of the economic embargo imposed by the United States Government against Cuba and to reject completely the extraterritorial policies embodied in the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts. We also call upon the European non-governmental and social organizations to step up their actions in that area.

We likewise appeal to the conscience of the world, requesting that all possible ways and means be used to help end the embargo against our country.

We, the non-governmental organizations, as actors in Cuban society, committed to this wonderful people and its programme of social action, declare unambiguously that we will remain loyal to our homeland and to Fidel and will do everything in our power to help guarantee our independence, our national sovereignty and the social, political and economic victories won during these years of struggle.

Havana, 29 October 2003